

U.S. Department of Education
2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 12TX25

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☒ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Mrs. Amber Holland

Official School Name: Gruver Elementary School

School Mailing Address: P O Box 1139
 Gruver, TX 79040-1139

County: Hansford County State School Code Number*: 098901101

Telephone: (806) 733-2031 E-mail: amber.holland@gruverisd.net

Fax: (806) 733-5412 Web site/URL: www.gruverisd.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Mr. David Teal Superintendent e-mail: david.teal@gruverisd.net

District Name: Gruver ISD District Phone: (806) 733-2001

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Dwayne Thompson

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12TX25

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

12TX25

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
(per district designation): 1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
3 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 15614

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	13	9	22		6	0	0	0
K	19	24	43		7	0	0	0
1	13	16	29		8	0	0	0
2	12	19	31		9	0	0	0
3	13	10	23		10	0	0	0
4	10	14	24		11	0	0	0
5	0	0	0		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								172

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
0 % Black or African American
52 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
47 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 7%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	1
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	11
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	12
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	172
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.07
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	7

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 40%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 68

Number of non-English languages represented: 1

Specify non-English languages:

Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 66%

Total number of students who qualify: 112

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 7%

Total number of students served: 12

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>2</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>2</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>28</u>	<u>0</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 14:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	97%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	<u>0</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>0%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
Total	<u>0%</u>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☐ No

☒ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award? Before 2007

Gruver, Texas, population 1,162, is a proud little community located at the top of the Texas Panhandle. Its citizens are hardworking, caring, and thoughtful people who take care of their neighbors and meet their needs. Agriculture and the school system are our town's major sources of employment. The people of Gruver value education as an extremely important part of the success of its children. While demographics have changed over the years, high expectations remain constant. Gruver Elementary opens its arms to 176 students who know they are entering a safe and loving environment when they come to school. Our students enjoy their learning environment, as exhibited by our 97% attendance rate.

“At Gruver Elementary, we believe that all children can and will learn. To ensure all children will reach their potential, we will strive to maintain high expectations and promote academic excellence for all students. We will make every effort to create and support a school environment in which all children and adults feel welcomed, respected, trusted, and an important part of the school. We will work to create an environment where we can learn together and support each other. We will endeavor to foster a positive school climate of a caring community which respects and values diversity and nurtures everyone's self esteem.” Our staff is driven by this mission statement in all endeavors to educate our children.

This dedication has earned our campus the Exemplary accountability rating from the Texas Education Agency for eight out of the last eight years. With the test changing from TAAS to TAKS, and passing standards increasing, we have worked diligently to maintain an Exemplary rating. We are proud of having accomplished many milestones. By increasing parent/teacher communication and building relationships with all stakeholders involved, our student mobility rate has decreased from 15% to 7%. By implementing Response to Intervention to meet individual student needs, the number of students receiving special education services has decreased from 12% to 7%. Our student-teacher ratio has decreased from 15:1 to 14:1, even though enrollment has increased from 147 to 172. This is due to the commitment of our district leadership's policy of putting students first. Our passing rate has been above the state average for third and fourth grade reading and math, as well as fourth grade writing, while Commended Performances have increased from 46% to 64%. The elementary has earned Gold Performance Awards in Attendance, Reading, Writing, and Math. Our UIL Academic team earned first place consecutively for the past five years by a margin of several hundred points each year. The National Center for Educational Achievement designated our school as a Higher Performing Campus, and we have received the Honor Roll award given by the Texas Business and Education coalition for the fifth time.

Continually striving for excellence, our staff works collaboratively to identify individual strengths and weaknesses and isolate areas that need to be supported or extended. We teach the child, not the class. Staff development trainings are chosen based on student needs and the skills teachers require to meet those needs. These include research-based programs such as Reading Recovery, Accelerated Reader, Success Maker, Waterford, differentiated instruction, dyslexia identification and training, Gifted and Talented training and instruction, special education inclusion, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) for English language learners, and learning styles training. Our teachers continually adapt and change their teaching styles to accommodate our “21st Century Learners.” Our vision at Gruver Elementary is that “all students will be given opportunities to demonstrate creativity, challenge their own capabilities, appreciate individual differences, and become lifelong learners.” We are never content with the status quo and continually strive to improve our teaching practices.

At Gruver Elementary, we teach the whole child. We know a child cannot learn until the physical and emotional needs are met first. Because our school board is committed to retaining small class sizes, we are able to reach every child in a personal way. We enlist the aid of organizations and community members such as churches, Lions Club, Boys' Club, The Boy Scouts of America, PTO and Alpha Mu Psi sorority to help meet student needs when we are not able to do so. This holistic approach allows us to accomplish great things in our school, and our children are the beneficiaries.

As the parents, community, administration, and faculty work together, we embrace the tradition of excellence from academics to sports to citizenship. Our traditions, which include UIL Award Assemblies, Basketball Skills Program, Kindergarten Rodeo, Muffins for Moms, Pizza for Parents, grade level plays, music and choir concerts, and Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, promote parent/community involvement that encourages our students to excel. Gruver's tradition of excellence is evident in our motto, "Our good isn't better 'til our better is our best."

1. Assessment Results:

The state of Texas requires all public schools to administer the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test which is a criterion-referenced assessment to measure the success of students in learning the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The TEKS are the compulsory framework from which our curriculum is based. Testing begins in third grade with math and reading skills. Fourth grade is tested in math, reading, and writing. Schools are rated based on the performance of their students. There are four ratings categories: Exemplary (90% passing), Recognized (80% passing), Academically Acceptable (70% passing) and Academically Unacceptable (<70% passing). Results are disaggregated into sub-groups such as Economically Disadvantaged, Ethnicity, Special Education, and Limited English Proficient (LEP). Individual students are awarded a Commended Performance rating for achieving a pre-determined, but varying variable, high level of excellence on individual tests. These test results are used to establish each school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and are detailed in the school's federal NCLB Report Card. Additional information can be viewed at TEA's website at www.tea.state.tx.us/. Gruver Elementary strives to maintain the Exemplary Status we have earned for the past five years while increasing the number of students achieving Commended Performance in all student subgroups.

Gruver Elementary is proud of our school's achievements on TAKS assessments. Emphasis on the passing rate is essential, but in accordance to our high expectations, our goal is to elevate our student learning to the commended level. We analyze our data and adapt instruction accordingly.

Our entire third grade has received a 100% passing rate on the TAKS reading test for three out of the past five years, and achieved 96% the other two years. Fourth grade students have maintained a 90% or better passing rate while Commended Performances increased from 42% to 52%. Third grade's Commended Performance ratings increased from 46% to 64%. We are especially proud that our two largest subgroups, Hispanic and White, are equitable in Commended Performance ratings. The fourth grade LEP subgroup's passing rate has varied in the past five years from 75% to 100%. Our teachers continue to intensify vocabulary development in a language-rich inclusion setting. Rosetta Stone was implemented to accelerate language acquisition. As a result, our LEP Commended Performance ratings have increased from 0% to 38% in third grade and 0% to 17% in fourth grade. Individualized Education Plans are designed for our special education population and their unique challenges. Growth for all student populations is monitored for continual improvement.

On the TAKS math test, Gruver Elementary's third grade has maintained a passing rate of over 92% for the past five years with 100% in two of those five years. Our fourth grade maintains a 100% passing rate with over 50% in the Commended Performance category. Our percentage of Commended Performance students in the third grade increased from 32% to 40%. Our LEP students in third grade had a passing rate of 100% in four out of five years, with one year at 86%. In addition to our fourth grade LEP students' 100% passing rate, 50% received a Commended Performance rating in four out of five years. One hundred percent of the third grade and fourth grade special education population passed the TAKS test in all five years that there were students in this subgroup. Our trend of increasing Commended Performance ratings is due to our district alignment of vocabulary, problem solving strategies, and higher level questioning.

To further encourage the high achievement of all students, Gruver Elementary utilizes supplemental programs that enhance student knowledge and are specifically tailored to meet individual needs. We work diligently with all students and offer extra tutorials and extended days to review skills and boost student confidence. Thirty minutes of tutorial time at the end of each day is set aside for teachers to pull small groups of students who may be struggling with similar skills.

We have extremely high expectations for our students at Gruver Elementary. We always strive for 100% passing rates and expect to increase the number of students receiving the Commended Performance rating. The state of Texas is changing testing procedures this year from the TAKS to the STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness). While assessments may change, Gruver Elementary embraces any academic challenge and looks forward to showcasing how hard our students work as well as the dedication and the commitment teachers demonstrate in order to excel in school and in life.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Gruver Elementary uses varied assessment tools to measure and monitor student progress. Testing data is used as a guide to adjust and drive instruction. By monitoring student progress, or lack thereof, teachers are able to provide accountability for both students and teachers and adjust instruction or interventions as needed.

We begin in the primary grades using the Observation Survey and the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) to assess the literacy knowledge and progress of students. Small groups are developed for intervention and enrichment in reading and writing. These groups meet in addition to whole group instruction. Additionally, informal testing of student fluency is monitored to ensure that each student is being instructed on an appropriate reading level. These small groups are adjusted as needs change for each student.

Third and fourth grade students are given benchmark tests throughout the year, utilizing state released tests and TEKS-based assessments. We analyze results to target areas of concern and form tutorial groups designed to enhance comprehension in those areas. We also adjust small groups according to the individual needs of our students.

While state assessments are important, we also look at other measurements. Three times a year, all grade levels take AIMSweb assessments to measure academic growth in reading and math. Results quickly show stagnation in learning, and then we make a decision regarding appropriate intervention in Tier 1, 2 or 3. Students in Tier 1 receive appropriate interventions in the classroom. Tiers 2 and 3 receive more focused researched-based instruction in small groups or individually. The Student Support Team (SST) monitors progress continually throughout the year to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

Teachers involve parents, initially in the fall, by informing them of the preliminary testing results for the year, if their child is meeting expectations for their grade level, and of any interventions or enrichment programs our school has to offer. We provide our parents with strategies and techniques that can be implemented at home. We inform our parents again when mid-year testing has concluded. Conferences are offered for any parent wanting to know how their child is progressing, but are mandated for the parents of any child who is still struggling at this point in the year. Teachers discuss with the parents any changes that will occur during the school day in order to help their child's progress accelerate.

In addition to relating the results of periodic assessments to parents, we also inform them of the progress of the children through report cards; every nine weeks for Pre-K and Kindergarten and every six weeks for students in first through fourth grades. Three-week progress reports are sent out for students in first and second grades with weekly averages being sent out for third and fourth graders.

Once we assess our students, we then implement intervention support according to identified needs. Literacy groups, Reading Recovery, Multisensory Approach to Phonemic Awareness (MAPP), My Reading Coach, Great Leaps, Waterford, Success Maker, Lexia, and Open Book are programs used to enhance vocabulary development, fluency, language acquisition, decoding skills, thus enabling students to have a strong reading foundation. Success Maker, Waterford, Times Attack, Math Fact Café, one on one or small group fact review, and personalized math tutoring are used to reinforce and build foundational math skills. For more specialized needs, we provide mentor tutoring, summer school, speech, vision therapy, Rosetta Stone and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) for English Language Learners, and differentiated instruction for Gifted and Talented.

After we receive the results of the the state-mandated tests, we inform the parents and community of our school's performance through the "TAKS Report Card". We publish this information in the local newspaper, make it accessible on our school website, and send it home with every child. We also send individual scores home with each child along with an explanation for the parents as to how these scores should be interpreted and include a contact phone number should questions arise.

We love to celebrate success with our community. We display awards and achievements on our school marquee on Main Street for all to see. Greyhound News, an e-mail subscription, and Greyhound Text, allow us to communicate quickly and conveniently with our parents and community. We are proud of our school and the achievements of our students and teachers. Our community takes great pleasure in the accomplishments of our school system, and we are grateful for the support and pride they show us in return.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

As a Title 1 Distinguished School, Gruver Elementary receives attention from many schools across the state as well as inquiries by the Region 16 Service Center and Texas Education Agency regarding the success of our students. Our school thrives on the collaborative environment in which we value and utilize the expertise that surrounds us, and we gladly extend this philosophy to include other educational entities. Representatives visit our campus to learn what has made us successful and gain ideas to implement in their own schools. Texas schools such as Pampa, Texline, Spearman, and Haskell, as well as Oklahoma Panhandle State University in Goodwell, Oklahoma, come to observe our approach of balanced literacy in action, which includes interactive writing lessons, guided reading lessons, and phonics lessons in our classrooms. We sent three of our highly-skilled teachers to Haskell Elementary for three days to train their staff on our balanced literacy model. Fredericksburg, Texas, invited our Reading Recovery teacher, one first grade and two kindergarten teachers to present a workshop on implementing our model in their K-5 grades. Prior to adopting their reading and math curriculums, Pringle-Morse CISD sent a second grade teacher to observe how our teachers deliver instruction in reading and math and how we adapt the chosen curriculum for individual student success.

When the Texas Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines were rewritten in 2008, we notified The Little Red Caboose, our local preschool and daycare provider, of the changes and created a concurrent curriculum. We continue to work collaboratively to ensure that no learning gaps manifest between children who attend the private preschool and students in Gruver ISD's Pre-Kindergarten program.

Gruver Elementary has supervised six student teachers in the past five years. While our staff is honored with the attention received by other educators, we are most flattered by the number of college students who request to be placed at Gruver Elementary. Inspiring our future teachers is a responsibility that we take seriously, and we gladly participate whenever these opportunities arise.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Parents and community members play a vital role in the success of our students. We keep our parents and community informed of what is happening at school through our Greyhound News texting service, articles in our local, online newspaper, and displaying information on our marquee on Main Street. At Gruver Elementary, a true collaboration exists between the parents and staff to personalize and optimize student performance. By communicating with parents in their native language and by using translators when needed, we give our parents tools they can use at home to reinforce learning. Training parents in research-based practices and proven strategies empowers them to take an active role in their child's learning process. We stay in personal contact through weekly newsletters, communication folders, and by conference with all parents throughout the year. Our innovative email-to-text communication allows individual teachers to notify our parents of important assignments and upcoming deadlines through emails that are converted to cell phone texts. Access to web-based and published programs give parents the opportunity to contribute to their students' education at home in a fun and challenging way.

Gruver Elementary provides numerous opportunities to welcome and honor those who are an important part of our students' lives. Whether they are observing school activities such as plays, band and choir programs, UIL Awards Assemblies, The Annual Kindergarten Rodeo, and basketball drill performances, or participating in pumpkin carving, tortilla making, Thanksgiving and Christmas lunches and classroom celebrations and the Little Olympics Track and Field Day hosted by our local Lions Club, we are grateful for the support and attention our community gives to these children. Our students look forward to sharing their school experiences with their loved ones at Pizza for Parents, Muffins for Moms, and Donuts for Dads. We are also fortunate that our high school students take time out of their busy school day to participate in our Big Brothers, Big Sisters program.

We encourage our students to give back to our community and teach our students the importance of philanthropy. The Gruver Elementary staff models the importance of giving to worthy causes by participating in programs such as Breast Cancer Awareness. Our students participate in canned food drives for the High Plains Food Bank, walk-a-thons for the American Red Cross, and the Jump Rope for the Heart program. We have started new traditions which include the second grade performing "Stone Soup" for the residents at the neighboring nursing home and correspondence with our military through collaboration with Gruver Junior High.

Whether we directly involve our parents and community in the learning process or simply entertain them, we help to shape the youth of our community in a collaborative manner. Constant family and community involvement are vital to our success!

1. Curriculum:

Gruver Elementary uses the TEKS as the backbone of our curriculum. Collaboration between grade levels ensures the smooth transition of our curriculum from one grade level to the next. As a result of this progression, shared vocabulary and problem-solving strategies help our students build on prior knowledge while exposing them to future expectations.

We view Reading/Language Arts as foundationally imperative. If students are not successful in reading, they will likely struggle in all facets of the educational process. We embrace balanced literacy along with a strong phonics-based reading instruction. Our Pre-K expands its pre-reading and writing instruction by introducing Letter Books by Macmillan/McGraw Hill and Saxon Phonics. We establish small, guided reading groups in Kindergarten during the second semester. Individualized Reading Recovery accelerates fluency for the bottom third of our first grade class. We continue Saxon Phonics through second grade and utilize Journeys, a text book series, by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt is through fourth grade. A customized reading inventory reaches across the curriculum using selections from Journeys, poems, fiction and non-fiction read-aloud stories, and songs. Daily, thirty-minute technology components like Success Maker Reading and Waterford help remediate or challenge students. All grades participate in Accelerated Reader to expand our students' reading skills outside the classroom.

Pre-K through first grade implements Saxon Math, incorporating varied supplemental programs as needed. The repetition and spiraling of content help young students recall foundational information. Second through fourth grades employ EnVision Math by Scott Foresman which provides specific instruction in math facts using Rocket Math and several web-based programs. Success Maker for math enhances all programs. Second through fourth grades encourage critical thinking skills using Target Math products published by Lone Star Learning for daily, whole group problem-solving practice.

For science, Gruver Elementary facilitates a hands-on approach to learning by creating a central lab from the culmination of all science equipment throughout the building. Teachers set up experiments and projects in the science lab where students can actively participate. Collaborating with the junior high and high school, we implemented strategies to teach the scientific process in a developmentally appropriate way throughout our lower grades. We use science journals as an integral part of our science curriculum which prepares them for intermediate and higher instruction.

We address social studies skills through a project- and activity-centered approach. Our TEKS are the driving force in our instruction with projects, allowing our students to express their individuality. We integrate the use of technology through multimedia presentations with Promethean Boards and United Streaming programs. Both social studies and science topics are incorporated into our literacy block through big books, read-aloud stories, Scholastic News, and Weekly Reader.

Technology is visible throughout our campus. Students have access to two computer labs, Promethean Boards in every classroom, web-based and software programs, at least one computer in every classroom, and Leap Pads (an early phonemic review tool) in Pre-K through first grade. To meet the needs of 21st Century Learners, we are moving towards implementing iPad 2s and iPods for instructional and individual student use.

To promote a healthy lifestyle for our students, we give our students thirty minutes of physical education daily. We immerse all our younger students (and our older students on an as-needed basis) in the research-based program, Ready Bodies, Ready Minds to prepare their bodies and minds for learning. This program builds strength and balance, and supports the developmental skill of crossing the midline while emphasizing the importance of being physically fit.

A healthy and productive brain must be fully developed in all cognitive areas, including artistic expression, which we address several ways. Pre-K, third and fourth grades are taught musical skills while first and second grades are instructed in art. We also challenge many of our students in the arts through UIL competitions in both Music and Art Appreciation.

The success of a child depends on the integration of basic knowledge acquisition, investigation, and expression into his/her education. Gruver Elementary subscribes to the research concluding that all these aspects work together to enhance the learning capabilities of the child.

2. Reading/English:

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) drives Gruver Elementary's curriculum. Teaching techniques address all learning styles; data drives our instruction; assessment is varied and ongoing; and teachers work collaboratively to integrate instruction and motivate students. We train our teachers in Gifted and Talented instructional strategies that are differentiated to benefit all global learners from our high achievers to our struggling students. Our school focuses on meeting the needs of all students, regardless of the student's level of performance.

Gruver Elementary implements the strategy of balanced literacy to enhance and complement the Journeys reading curriculum. Journeys helps differentiate student reading instruction through leveled readers that have shared vocabulary skills and topics, so that all students are receiving the same instruction on their individual reading levels. We embrace this approach because of our diverse student population. Prior to this implementation, many of our students performed below grade level, and our state-adopted reading materials did not advance or support students adequately. Balanced literacy, foundation in phonics, word cards, guiding reading, and vocabulary enrichment have been our driving forces in allowing students to reach their highest potential in reading. Reading and writing go hand-in-hand and must be strengthened together. Journeys curriculum gives teachers a guide to do so as well as integrating other subjects into the literature block time. Our decision to enrich our curriculum with a balanced literacy approach gives each student the opportunity to meet individual goals and excel.

We also incorporate the Reading Recovery program to intensify instruction for the bottom third of first grade. This program is a prescriptive, individualized program which can last up to twenty weeks. Two highly-trained teachers facilitate this program. We continue to monitor these students throughout their time in the elementary and students are placed in small literacy groups when support is needed. From kindergarten through fourth grade, these small literacy groups provide needs-specific support for the reading and writing process. Our commitment to early intervention contributes to the success of our students.

Saxon Phonics in grades K-2 addresses the visual part of reading. This intensive phonics program teaches all aspects of phonemic awareness. Renaissance Learning's STAR Reading assessments determine appropriate individual reading levels that ensure student comprehension and fluency as well as encourage a joy of reading. We then encourage independent reading through the utilization of Accelerated Reader, which tests reading comprehension, in grades one through four.

The use of technology to enhance our learning environment is essential. The Waterford Computer Lab addresses reading skills for our Pre-Kindergarten through first grade. First through fourth grades use Pearson's Success Maker, which identifies skills not mastered and allows students to progress through reading instruction at their own pace. Students receive instruction at their own level, allowing for both remediation and acceleration opportunities.

At Gruver Elementary, we make every effort to test, diagnose, and intervene as necessary so that reading levels are developmentally and academically appropriate.

3. Mathematics:

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) also drive our math curriculum. Our administration supports our campus's decision to have a split adoption to meet specific student needs. We selected Saxon Math for our kindergarten and first grade. Its spiral curriculum teaches sequential steps to problem-solving and supports student recall of learned math skills. The provided manipulatives are effective learning tools for our struggling learners while enhancing the skills of our more advanced learners. We have daily "Math Meetings" in each classroom to build foundational math concepts essential to the successful development of future math skills. Our second through fourth grades use Envision Math to extend prior knowledge into higher-level thinking processes. All students are developing logical thinking skills while engaging in problem-solving.

We enhance our adopted texts with Pearson's Success Maker program in our computer lab. Every child in grades one through four is tested to determine his/her instructional level. Individualized instruction and extended activities are used to meet students' needs at every academic level. Each level has an individual meeting time and uses various published materials to jumpstart mathematical thinking. Learning math facts is crucial for success in higher grades, and we utilize Rocket Math, Math Fact Café, and Two Minute Warning to ensure our students are ready to meet that challenge.

We design our schedule to allow time to work with students individually or in small groups to target high-need areas. We have excellent support staff trained to close learning gaps quickly so that our students can resume regular classroom instruction. We utilize our special education teacher for inclusion so that our special needs students get the expert teaching from the classroom teacher while receiving the additional support they may need. We offer extended day programs in third and fourth grades the week before state-mandated testing in order to review skills for those who need assistance, allowing for uninterrupted instruction during the school day.

The demographics at Gruver Elementary are constantly changing, and we continue to seek out unique ways of meeting the needs of every child, every day.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Gruver Elementary's mission statement is to ensure that all students will reach their potential. This extends to more than just reading and math. Our analysis of past district-wide testing data leads us to make improvements in our science program. Inquiry based instruction is practiced so students have opportunities to "Think Like a Scientist". Our school cooperatively develops vertically-aligned science vocabulary and scientific process journaling to enable fluid learning and early exposure to key science terms and concepts. Training and brainstorming across the grade levels allows us to identify specific needs and strengths we possess in our school and community. Scaffolded instruction allows us to share in the expertise of our junior high and high school. Experiments performed by older grades are observed by our younger students so that they may learn from, and be encouraged by, those they admire.

We invest a significant amount of our library budget in nonfiction science books to be used in our guided reading program for a cross-curricular approach. Teachers also utilize the National Geographic Magazine for Kids to demonstrate how to read and comprehend a nonfiction piece of writing and expose our students to a higher level of thinking. We implement science journaling at each grade level to build and expand scientific writing skills.

The elementary teachers' decision to combine all science equipment into a well-equipped lab benefits all teachers and students in the elementary. Promethean Boards and Internet technology allow for the use of Success Maker, United Streaming, and Waterford to enhance the science curriculum. The video conference lab allows us to take our students on virtual field trips, ensuring that Gruver's remote location does not impede our students' opportunities to experience what the world has to offer.

Pairing our fiction literature with science nonfiction in our reading program and utilizing video opportunities has successfully sparked the interest of our students. By improving the delivery of our science curriculum and boosting enthusiasm for science, our science scores continue to rise and academic excellence thrives.

5. Instructional Methods:

Gruver Elementary has a diverse population with various needs, and we strive to differentiate our instruction to meet those needs. Differentiated instruction utilized in the classroom includes scaffolding and tiering instruction, providing opportunities for critical thinking, giving students instructional choices, and adapting instruction to specific learning styles. Sixty percent of our students benefit from the free and reduced lunch program. We serve a large percentage of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Teachers are certified in ESL to meet the needs of these learners—both academically and in language acquisition. With students overlapping in several categories, including Gifted and Talented, we take each child to their highest potential.

Gruver Elementary utilizes technology to enrich our students' education. Rosetta Stone is available to our ESL, as well as GT students, in order to diversify instruction beyond the classroom. Dyslexic students benefit from the use of the Lexia, an individualized computer software program. We also challenge and remediate students through Pearson's Success Maker program in which each child is assessed and able to work at their individual level to improve their skills in math and language arts. We serve our students with special needs through inclusion. These students, as well as their classroom peers, benefit from the scaffolding support provided by the special education teacher while receiving instruction from the regular classroom teacher.

We utilize experts in their field from our community to enrich the educational opportunities of our GT students. We give GT students opportunities to collaborate together on specific projects pertaining to their interests and talents. We serve every identified GT student by a certified GT teacher. In this way, we continue to challenge their thinking and promote problem-solving skills.

In the classroom, we differentiate through whole-group instruction and flexible, small groups in reading, math, and science as well as work stations, and on an individual basis so that the needs of every type of learner are met. We expect our students to think critically and creatively with teachers using multiple styles of delivery including digital lessons, guided hands-on exploration, field trip opportunities, virtual field trips, and interactive lessons. Teachers follow up with web-based instruction which allows them to evaluate, remediate, and enrich the learning of students. We also utilize our motor lab throughout the day for students needing specific physical training to enhance their academic learning. It is our goal to educate the whole child using his or her strengths in order to overcome challenges.

6. Professional Development:

We determine professional development by the depth and complexity of our Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), student data, and the District Comprehensive Needs Assessment results. Gruver Elementary is dedicated to providing our students with the best-trained professionals available. The success of our staff development is evident in our ability to maintain an Exemplary rating for the past eight years while increasing Commended Performance scores in all student populations. Our campus improvement team uses current testing data to identify areas in need and determine the direction of our professional development. Some of our most effective professional development workshops come from our own teachers within the district. After attending useful professional development, those teachers come back to our campus and train the rest of the staff in what we have named "Grow Meetings." These inspiring meetings occur several times throughout the year and encourage our staff to stay motivated and open to change. Book studies throughout the year keep teachers current on educational topics and give them tools to enhance lesson delivery.

We dedicate ourselves to train our new teachers, mentoring them throughout their first year and providing assistance and support. At times, we hire outside help, such as retired teachers, to come in and help with the mentoring process. We provide professional development time for all our teachers before the school year begins. We collaborate on the diversification strategies that have worked with specific students in the past so that transition to the next grade is smooth and successful.

To prevent our teachers from spending valuable time on the road that could be used more effectively in our classrooms, our district provides ESL and GT update training as well as trainings identified by our teachers to be beneficial to our students. Because our administration utilizes advances in technology, we contract, through Region 16, a technology specialist who works with our teachers in small groups to provide up-to-the-minute training. When relevant, we send teachers to training outside of the district. The Early Literacy and Reading Recovery Convention is extremely beneficial to our early literacy teachers. The Staff Development for Educators (SDE) grade level conferences inspire our teachers with knowledge and ideas they implement immediately in their classrooms. Ready Bodies Learning Minds training enables us to develop our students in a well-rounded way and diversify for students with specific needs. It is our belief that we have remarkable students in part because we have an outstanding and well-trained staff.

7. School Leadership:

Our school leadership philosophy is to create and support a school environment in which students, teachers, and parents can all learn and thrive to the height of their abilities in a safe and nurturing environment. Our instructional leadership consists of our principal, the site-based decision making team, a counselor, and excellent mentoring teachers.

The principal works closely with the leadership within our district which consists of two other principals and the superintendent. Her open door policy for teachers, students, and parents makes her visible in all areas so that others feel comfortable coming to her with problems or suggestions. The principal takes time out of her demanding schedule to work with struggling students and Gifted and Talented students as GT coordinator. She enhances the education of our GT students by arranging field trips and bringing in expertise and talent from our community. The principal works with students and parents in implementing discipline plans when necessary and encourages parents to visit the school and become involved in their child's education. She works with the site-based decision-making team to ensure funds are allocated where resources are needed.

Our site-based decision-making team consists of the principal, teachers, community members, business owners, and parents. They ensure that the needs of our school are met through data-driven decision-making. The committee identifies the evolving needs of our ever-changing population so that teachers can seek appropriate instructional strategies.

Our principal and teachers share in the leadership role when collaboration allows for better educational decisions. We implemented "Grow Meetings" at which we share ideas, discuss parent involvement activities and recommend teacher training opportunities. When we determined that students had additional social and emotion needs, we implemented the Big Brothers Big Sisters program on our campus. Mentoring is provided for new teachers and teachers changing grade level/ subject areas. Our teachers have also found success with vertical planning during lunch or conference times.

Our entire staff takes ownership in the leadership of our school with our principal as the ultimate decision maker. We take our jobs very personally and encourage each other, as well as the students, to succeed. We create a family-like working environment which results in a low turnover rate and provides consistency and stability for our students.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007

Publisher: Pearson Education, Inc.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard and Commended	100	92	100	95	96
Commended	40	29	70	57	32
Number of students tested	25	24	27	21	25
Percent of total students tested	100	96	96	95	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	4	0	5	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard and Commended	100	94	100	100	100
Commended	25	28	59	42	20
Number of students tested	12	18	17	12	15
2. African American Students					
Met Standard and Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard and Commended	100	85	100		92
Commended	18	31	47		17
Number of students tested	11	13	15	7	12
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard and Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested	1	2	1	0	2
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard and Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested	8	7	8	4	5
6. White					
Met Standard and Commended	100	100	100	92	100
Commended	54	27	100	67	46
Number of students tested	13	11	12	12	13
NOTES:					

12TX25

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007

Publisher: Pearson Education, Inc.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard and Commended	100	96	96	100	100
Commended	64	42	64	53	46
Number of students tested	25	24	28	19	24
Percent of total students tested	100	96	97	90	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	4	0	5	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard and Commended	100	94	94	100	100
Commended	42	44	56	33	33
Number of students tested	12	18	18	12	15
2. African American Students					
Met Standard and Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard and Commended	100	92	100		100
Commended	55	31	47		36
Number of students tested	11	13	15	7	11
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard and Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested	1	2	1	0	2
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard and Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested	8	7	8	4	5
6. White					
Met Standard and Commended	100	100	92	100	100
Commended	69	55	85	80	54
Number of students tested	13	11	13	10	13
NOTES:					

12TX25

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007

Publisher: Pearson Education, Inc.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard and Commended	100	100	100	100	100
Commended	63	52	59	56	58
Number of students tested	24	31	22	27	26
Percent of total students tested	92	97	96	96	87
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	1	0	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	8	3	4	0	7
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard and Commended	100	100	100	100	100
Commended	68	43	50	44	43
Number of students tested	19	21	16	16	14
2. African American Students					
Met Standard and Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard and Commended	100	100		100	100
Commended	75	31		64	50
Number of students tested	12	16	8	11	14
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard and Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested	2	2	1	1	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard and Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested	6	7	5	4	0
6. White					
Met Standard and Commended	100	100	100	100	100
Commended	50	73	57	47	67
Number of students tested	12	15	14	15	12
NOTES:					

12TX25

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007

Publisher: Pearson Education, Inc.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard and Commended	96	94	90	93	100
Commended	52	45	5	22	42
Number of students tested	23	31	21	27	26
Percent of total students tested	88	97	91	96	84
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	1	2	0	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	12	3	9	0	6
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard and Commended	94	90	87	94	100
Commended	50	33	0	13	29
Number of students tested	18	21	15	16	14
2. African American Students					
Met Standard and Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard and Commended	91	88		91	100
Commended	45	25		9	29
Number of students tested	11	16	8	11	14
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard and Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested	1	2	0	1	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard and Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested	6	7	5	4	0
6. White					
Met Standard and Commended	100	100		93	100
Commended	58	67		27	58
Number of students tested	12	15	13	15	12
NOTES:					

12TX25

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard and Commended	100	96	100	97	98
Commended	51	41	65	56	45
Number of students tested	49	55	49	48	51
Percent of total students tested	96	96	96	95	91
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	2	1	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	3	2	2	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard and Commended	100	97	100	100	100
Commended	51	36	54	43	31
Number of students tested	31	39	33	28	29
2. African American Students					
Met Standard and Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard and Commended	100	93	100	100	96
Commended	47	31	52	55	34
Number of students tested	23	29	23	18	26
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard and Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested	3	4	2	1	2
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard and Commended	100	93	100		
Commended	28	14	54		
Number of students tested	14	14	13	8	5
6.					
Met Standard and Commended	100	100	100	96	100
Commended	52	53	76	55	56
Number of students tested	25	26	26	27	25
NOTES:					

12TX25

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard and Commended	98	94	93	95	100
Commended	58	43	38	34	43
Number of students tested	48	55	49	46	50
Percent of total students tested	94	96	94	93	90
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	2	2	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	6	3	4	2	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard and Commended	96	91	90	96	100
Commended	46	38	30	21	31
Number of students tested	30	39	33	28	29
2. African American Students					
Met Standard and Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard and Commended	95	89	95	94	100
Commended	50	27	30	16	32
Number of students tested	22	29	23	18	25
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard and Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested	2	4	1	1	2
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard and Commended	92	93	100		
Commended	29	14	15		
Number of students tested	14	14	13	8	5
6.					
Met Standard and Commended	100	100	92	95	100
Commended	63	61	46	48	55
Number of students tested	25	26	26	25	25
NOTES:					

12TX25